

The Truth of All Truth – Christ is Lord

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Acts 2:36

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The truth of all truths—Christ is Lord.

Let's turn, first of all, to Luke chapter two. The truth of all truths—Jesus Christ is Lord. In Luke the second chapter, verse 11 the angel of God in announcing the birth of Jesus Christ had this to say. "For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord, Christ the Lord."

And then in the second chapter of Acts brother Jay Wembly read from Peter's sermon at Pentecost. And this is the way he closed the message. In Acts 2:36 he says, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know, assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom you have crucified both Lord and Christ."

Then in Philippians, the second chapter, beginning with verse nine the apostle Paul, writing to the church at Philippi, chapter two, verse nine, speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fact that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. Now, verse nine, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." The word "things" is in italics. You may leave it out. "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Then Romans 10, Romans chapter 10. The apostle is talking about folks who are ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own, would not submit to the righteousness of God which is Christ. And then he says in verse nine of Romans 10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," and correctly translated, and in most of the new translations that are accurate it says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord."

Jesus Christ is Lord. This is the truth of all truths. This is the rock upon which all else rests. Jesus Christ is Lord.

As Lord he has all authority. He said to his disciples in Matthew chapter 28 when he gave them the commission to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations in his

name. He preceded it with this remark. "All authority," in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth." As Lord he has all authority, absolute power in heaven and earth.

When he prayed in John 17 he said, "Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him authority, power over all flesh," not over those who believe, not over those who trust him only, over all flesh. Thou hast given him absolute authority. As Lord, Jesus Christ is Lord. He is not going to be Lord. He didn't used to be Lord. He is Lord, always has been Lord. And as Lord he has all authority and all power in heaven and earth over all flesh. As Lord, all are his subjects. The Scripture says he died that he might be Lord of the dead and the living, of the saved and the unsaved, of the believer and the unbeliever. He died that he might be Lord. He purchased the world. It belongs to him. Every creature in the universe is under his sovereign majesty and under his reign. And all subject, all are subject of his and under him. As Lord he has no rival. He says in Philippians, "God has given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, every tongue," tongues of angels and men, devils, demons in heaven, on earth and under the earth. There is non other name above his name. And, as Lord, he owns all things.

Turn with me to Colossians one. In the first chapter of Colossians, beginning with verse 16 it talks about our Lord Jesus Christ being in the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature. In verse 16 of Colossians one the Scripture says, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, that are in earth, visible and invisible: all things were created by him, visible and invisible."

Well, what's visible here today? Well, the trees and the mountains and the stars and the moon, the sun and the valleys and the river and the people. What is invisible? Angels, spirits, powers, principalities, these things are invisible. But they were created by him, forces, the force of gravity. All of these different...the electricity in the air, the power to transmit things, voices, signals, visible and invisible. "For by him were all things created, all things that are in heaven that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones..."

Satan has a throne, a throne of evil, a throne of deception. He has no power at all except delegated authority, delegated power. Whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers all things were created by him and for him, even the wrath of man shall praise the Lord, shall work the purpose of God. There is the directed will of our God and the permissive will of our God, the secret will of our God, the revealed will of our God. But all things came from God. He said, "I am the Lord. I create light and darkness. I create good and I create evil."

And you have to figure out how that can be consistent with the holiness of God and with the righteousness of God, but you can rest assured that it is because all things were made by him. We leave nothing out from under his authority. In his own time, in due time, in his own purpose he shall bring all things to pass for his ultimate eternal glory. All things. That's what he is saying here. And by him were all things created. He was first...in the

beginning God. There were no powers or principalities or dominions or thrones or creatures, only God. And all things came from him and he—look at verse 17—“And he is before all things.”

Who are we talking about here? We are talking about him who redeemed us by his blood. We are talking about him who is the image of the invisible God. We are talking about him who is the first born of every creature. We are talking about Jesus Christ. That’s who we are talking about.

And he, Jesus Christ, created all things. And he, Jesus Christ, is before all things and by him, Jesus Christ, all things consist. In him we live and move and have our being. By him all things continue.

I breathe this morning by the permission of Jesus Christ, Charlie. I lift this hand by the permission and power and will of the Lord Jesus Christ. “And he is the head of the body the Church who is the beginning, the first born from the dead that in all things he, he, he might have the preeminence.”

Jesus Christ is Lord, Lord. I mean in every sense of the word. As Lord he has all authority in heaven and earth, over all flesh. As Lord all are his subjects. The devil is God’s devil. He couldn’t touch Job without God’s permission. When he turned to Peter our Lord said, “Satan hath desired thee that he might sift thee.” He couldn’t touch Peter without our Lord’s permission.

All are his subjects. All are his subjects, the living and the dead. He died that he might be Lord of the dead and the living. As Lord he has no rival. As Lord he owns all things. All things were made by him and for him, by him they exist. In him they live, move and have their being. And all things will ultimately work together for his glory and the good of his elect. As Lord his will shall be done.

Turn to the book of Daniel, Daniel chapter four. There was a ruler by the name of Nebuchadnezzar who was proud, lifted up in his heart. He talked about great Babylon that he had built, great things that he had done. And the Lord God put him under judgment. He lost his mind. He went out into the fields and lived like an animal. His finger nails grew like bird claws and his hair grew like the coat of an animal. He lost his reasoning. He lost his mind. He lost his understanding. And he stayed out there for seven times, whatever that means, seven days, months, weeks or years, but he stayed there.

And verse 34 of Daniel four says, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”

As Lord his will shall be done. He said, "I declare the end from the beginning. And from ancient times the things that are not yet done in saying, 'My counsel shall stand.' And I will do all my pleasure."

They said, "David, here is our god. Our god is an idol. Our god is a statue. Our god is a picture. Here is our god."

Some of you have your gods on your walls at home. You call him Jesus. You've got a picture of him. And we have gods everywhere. Some of you have your gods around your necks in the form of crosses and crucifixes. Some of you have your gods in other places.

And they said, "David, here is our gods. Now where is yours?"

He said, "Our God is in the heavens. Our God is in the heavens. Our God is not sitting on pedestals in human temples. Our God is not hanging on walls in lovely pastel shades. Our God is in the heavens. And he hath done whatsoever he pleased, whatsoever our God pleases. That's what he does in heaven and earth, in the seas and all deep places. That's my God. The earth is his footstool and every creature his subject. And all the universe sings his praises and all shall one day bow and confess that he is Lord to God's eternal glory."

Jesus Christ is Lord, not ought to be as some say, not should be. He is Lord. That's what the Scripture says. And this is a truth that is misunderstood by friend and foe. Men do not make Christ Lord.

Turn back to my text in Acts 2:36. Men do not make Christ Lord. I hear preachers saying that and I wish they wouldn't say it. "I want you to make Jesus your Lord."

Men do not make Christ Lord. I beg your pardon. Men bow to Christ who is already Lord whom the Father made Lord. Read Acts 2:36. And Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, God hath made him Lord. God made him Lord." He is Lord by decree. He is Lord by eternal, sovereign decree. God already made him Lord.

Men do not make Christ Lord, they bow to Christ as Lord. They submit to Christ as Lord. They worship Christ as Lord. But God almighty already has made him Lord. He is Lord. Not ought to be, should be, could be is. He said, "All authority is given to me in heaven and earth. I have all power over all flesh. He is before all things."

The Lordship of Christ is not an idea. It's a reality. It's a reality. It is already his. The Lordship of Christ is not a theory. It's a fact just like Christianity. This is where our whole concept of Christianity in this day is influenced by Finneyism and Moodyism and men like Billy Sunday and Sam Jones and the high pressure Hollywood television

evangelists are carrying right on today. Christianity is a way of looking at life. I beg your pardon.

Christianity, Jay, is not a way of looking at life. It is life. It is life. It's not a way of looking at life. It is not a way of living life. It is life. And any man who has not Christ has not life. Christianity is not a philosophy along with other philosophies such as Buddhism and Mohammedism and Confucius, followers of Confucius or some other philosophy. Christianity is a principle. It's the nature of God. Christ said, "Out of your belly, out of your innermost being shall flow rivers of water, living water."

Christ dwelleth in you. Paul said, "I travail till Christ be formed in you."

Christianity is not a philosophy. It's a principle. It's a source of righteousness. Holiness is God in a person. Christianity is not a set of morals.

I hear preachers all the time trying to get people to quit this and quit that and quit that and start doing this and start doing that and start doing that, giving them a set of morals to live by. And these sets of morals usually change with the countries. It is called geographical ethics or situation ethics. It changes with the situation.

I remember back years ago it was sin to watch television. Now preachers are on television. When radio first came out radio was a sin. Now everybody has got a radio even in their cars. I remember back when a woman showed her elbows she was sinning. Now they show their shoulders. I remember back when you saw a woman's ankle it was sin. Now you know how far that's gone. But all these morals keep changing, you know. They keep...you go to this country, that that's right. You can drink a glass of wine in France, but you can't in Kentucky. You can go mixed bathing in the north, but you can't in the south. I don't understand all these...they are all different. You go to one denomination...

I'm tell you: Christianity is not a set of morals. It is a nature of godliness. It is the nature of godliness. It's Christ in the heart who produces love which is a fulfillment of the law. Joy, faith, peace, meekness, temperance, temperance. That's what the Word of God teaches: meekness, gentleness, goodness, humility, a love for God, a love for others, righteousness, honesty, integrity.

Our Lord said it's not that which you put in your mouth that defiles you, it's that which comes out of your wicked heart. That's what defiles you. It's the envy and jealousy and hatred and bigotry and malice and prejudice and tradition. That's what's rotten.

Somebody said, "Alcohol will ruin this country."

No. This country ruined alcohol.

"Drugs are the ruination of our young people."

No, they ruined drugs.

I was in the hospital last night and there was a dear lady operated on and her...the operation causes pain. I thank God for drugs. I thank God she can take something and make that pain go away. But here some fool takes it to make his troubles go away.

Well, drugs didn't ruin him. He ruined them.

I wish we could get our heads on straight. Jesus Christ is Lord, Lord, sovereign Lord, eternal Lord, everybody's Lord. And this thing of salvation is a submission to his Lordship, bowing, worshiping, submitting, surrendering, unconditional surrender to the Lordship of Christ to reign over me, to live in my heart, to sit on the throne of my heart, to dictate my talk and walk and thoughts. That is Christianity, not joining the Baptist Church and doing what the Baptists do or joining the Catholics and doing what the Catholics do. It is submitting to his Lordship.

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord, believe in thine heart God raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved.”

Turn to Luke chapter 11. Now, let me show you something here that's...that's of great importance in Luke the 11th chapter. And I am saying...I am saying something different. I know it is different and I am saying I believe what a lot of folks either can't say or at least won't say. In Luke chapter 11 Christ's Lordship was not established by a conference. His Lordship, his reign, his rule was not established by a conference or only by a decree. But his Lordship was established by a costly conflict on a cross, a costly action on a cross. He came to grips on that cross with sin and destroyed it's power. He came to grips on that cross with Satan's power and evil and he...the prince of this world is cast out. He is subdued. He crushed the head of the serpent. He came to grips with judgment and wrath and death and hell. And he arose the conqueror, but he conquered them by suffering.

“Though he were a Son yet he learned obedience by the things he suffered.” And he is not only Lord by decree, he is Lord because he purchased the right and he conquered the forces of evil and he drove them out. And the same thing is true of the Lordship of Christ in a man's life. It's not something that comes to pass by a decision. It is something that comes to pass through conflict and a costly conquest and a costly action. And the establishment or the erecting of a cross in that man's life.

Let me show you that in Luke chapter 11. You say you are a believer? You are a Christian? How did you come to be a Christian?

“I just decided to be one.”

Oh, you did? Is that the way it took place? Is that the way Jesus Christ became Lord? He just decided he would be?

He bought the right. He drove out those who professed to be lords. He drove out those who were trying to take the lordship that didn't belong to them. He drove out the squatters. He drove out the parasites. He drove out the forces that have supplanted him, the rebels, the traitors. He drove them out. And when he comes into a man's heart...let me tell you something. Somebody else sneaked in and occupied the throne of your heart one day in the Garden of Eden. His name is Satan. He said, "We're children of wrath even as others. We do the will of Satan even as others. We follow, we walk after the prince of the power of the air, the spirit of wickedness. We do the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. That's our program. We are programmed to that. He sneaked in and took over it and make us rebels."

Now, when Christ comes to sit on that throne he has got to unseat that fellow that is there that ought not be there. He has. He's got to drive him out. And he doesn't go out easy. You just don't decide that you are going to change management. Somebody has got to be conquered and driven out.

Now, watch this. Luke 11 and verse 21. "When a strong man armed," that's Satan, "armed with lies and deceptions and evil, armed with foolish things like this pleasure in sin for a season, armed with lies like this 'You take this fruit you'll be like God.' Armed with lies like this, 'God won't punish sin.' Armed with lies like this, 'Heaven is a beautiful place and everybody is going to it, they are just traveling different roads.' Armed with lies like this that there is no heaven and there is no hell, that this is all there is to it. Armed with...when a strong man armed with lies and deception and subtlety and craftiness keeps his palace his goods are in peace."

And there is a peace that the wicked enjoy. It is a false peace. It is a phony peace. It is a peace of materialism and it is a peace of false security. And it may be the peace of a false religion. It's like the rich young man that said, "I'm going to tear down those barns over there tomorrow and build me some bigger barns because I'm in good shape."

And that is Satan. Satan will give a man a false hope, a false refuge, a false peace because he dictates the thoughts of people. He dictates the mind. He has come in and he reigns and he rules in wicked hearts. He sits on the throne of evil men's hearts.

"But when a stronger than he..." Who is that? That's our Lord. That doesn't mean the preacher because no preacher is stronger than Satan. That doesn't mean an angel. Gabriel said himself, to the devil. He said, "The Lord rebuke thee. That's not my business." Gabriel would not take Satan on one on one. And you better not try it either now or you will wind up the loser. Peter couldn't handle him, Jeb. Gabriel couldn't handle him. There is not but one who can.

Satan is powerful. He is not all powerful. He is mighty. He is not all mighty. He is strong. He is not omnipotent. So there is one stronger than he and he comes upon him and he overcomes him.

Do you think he doesn't put up a battle? Do you think he doesn't wage a warfare? You don't think that Satan puts forth some effort to hold his territory? Sure he does. Sure he does. But our Lord conquers him and takes from him all his lies and deception and craftiness and armor wherein he trusted and divideth his spoils. That's what our Lord said. That's the way he becomes a man's Lord. He drives out this false Lord, this false king. He conquers him and divides his spoil and takes away his armor and runs him out and Christ comes in to reign, supreme Lord and sovereign and master.

And then our Lord said, "He that is not with me is against me. And he that gathereth not with me scattereth."

Now, here is modern day religion. Here is a decision. Listen to this, verse 24. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man." Now, he wasn't driven out. He wasn't overcome. He wasn't conquered. He wasn't defeated. There was no battle. He just made a decision. The unclean spirit who dwelt within this man, the spirit of pride and evil and jealousy and hatred...this is a man who reforms and turns over a new leaf. The unclean spirit just decided to go out. He decided to leave and he walked through dry places and he didn't find any rest. So he said, "I'll return to my house." It never did cease to be his house. The throne never ceased to be his throne. The den never ceased to be his den. He just voluntarily left it for a while.

You see a fellow, he gets upset over the fact that he is drinking too much so he decides to quit. Everybody says, "He got religion."

A fellow is mistreating his wife and family and he decides, well, he ought to be a nice daddy for a while so he changes and turns over a new leaf. The fellow says, "Well, there is a heaven and a hell and I don't want to go to hell. I'd like to go to heaven." So he starts to church. And he starts giving. He may even teach in Sunday school class. But he has decided to do better. The unclean spirit went out. But it never...he wasn't...the unclean spirit wasn't conquered, he wasn't overcome, he wasn't driven out, Christ didn't come in to reign and to rule and to sit upon the throne. It was an empty house, empty, empty. And he said, "I will return to my house." And when he came, when he got there he found it swept, not washed with the blood of Christ, not cleansed by the atoning sacrifice, swept, swept with human effort. And sweeping...you women know sweeping just takes the dust from here and puts it over there on the chair. Sweeping just takes up the cobwebs here and puts them somewhere else. It just makes it look good. The only way for anything to be clean is to wash it. Wash it. Purge it. And he found this house swept. He found this fellow had quit all these different things and he found it garnished.

Do you know what garnished means? Decorated. He had him a lapel pin up here that says, "I'm glad I'm saved." Or, "It's fun being saved." Or something like that, you know. And he had him a good old Good Samaritan Bible with red letters and pictures of Jesus in there, you know, and Samson and Moses and a great big thing. And he carried it around and he had a bumper sticker that said, "You love Jesus, honk." He just had all these decorations, all these...he garnished it. The house...in one account the Scripture says it was empty. It wasn't filled with the grace of God or the presence of Christ or the

glory of God. It wasn't filled with the love for Christ and a love for people. It wasn't filled with a hunger and thirst for righteousness. It was empty.

Oh, he wasn't doing anything. But he wasn't loving anybody either. He wasn't breaking any laws. But he wasn't producing any holiness either. He was just empty that's all. Empty. Just like a sounding gong, you know. If I do all these and have not love I am like a sounding brass, just a hollow echo, empty, swept and garnished.

So the old demon said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do," verse 26. He goes and takes to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter and dwell there and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Have you seen this happen over and over again? The church has a revival. They invite a preacher in. He employs techniques. He employs gimmicks. He employs pressure. And he talks about heaven and hell and mother and death and all these things. And the people talk to each other and don't you want to be saved. And they go out and they bring them in. They come down the aisle and make a profession. And they give up different things and they sweep the house and they decorate it, don't you know. And they join a Sunday school class and they get baptized and they become church members and they take up these little eccentricities of religion and this outward piety and they are just getting along so good the evil spirit just voluntarily went out. Of course he had a little bit of help. We urged him. And he didn't mind. He didn't care if you get religion, just so you don't know Christ. He doesn't care if you make a decision, just so he is not conquered and overcome and driven out. Just so Christ doesn't sit on the throne. He doesn't care if you get fixed up, you know.

When he...after a while he quits walking around out there and he says, "I'm going home." And he comes back and he finds that fellow all religious, you know, all garnished and empty and swept. And he goes out and gets him seven more fellows, religious devils. And they are the worst kind. And he brings them in. And that fellow becomes a thorn in the church's side. He becomes a thorn in the pastor's side. He becomes a thorn in everybody's side. He is unhappy. They are unhappy. He is tired of church and he is tired of religion and he didn't have any life or reality anyway and he is trying to live a Christian life without Christ. He is trying to put on a show that is not in here. He is trying to put what he can't do in the strength of human flesh. And after a while he will either get to be the worst example of hypocrisy or he will quit church altogether. And that's the way most of them do.

You wonder about the turnover all the time in churches? There it is, right there. There it is, right there. But let me tell you something. There is no way of salvation, true salvation, true redemption. And I'm not being harsh. I'm not being narrow minded. I'm telling you the truth. I'm telling you what's wrong with all of this come down the aisle and all of this make a profession and all of this telling people they are saved when they are not saved, they are not delivered. They are not redeemed. They are not Christian.

They are religionists. That's all they are. And I'll tell you the folks that make those folks are folks that are just like them. A preacher can't tell what he doesn't know any more than he can come back from where he hasn't been. He can't preach repentance until he has repentance. He can't preach the Lordship of Christ until Christ is enthroned in his own heart. He can't tell a man what salvation is until he has been saved. He can't tell a man what a relationship with God is until he has that relationship. And what they are doing is making converts just like themselves.

Our Lord said in Matthew seven, "You beware of false preachers. They are everywhere. They are many of them. They are ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. They profess to be what they are not." And he said, "You know how you can tell who they are? You can tell them by their fruits. They produce what they are." Apple trees produce apples. False preachers produce false converts.

There is no way of salvation apart from an unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ as Lord. Saul of Tarsus was smitten down on the road to Damascus. He didn't raise his hand. He didn't walk an aisle. He didn't make a profession. He bit the dust. And his reply to our Lord's Word was, "Lord, what will you have me to do?"

The thief on the cross, now you stop and think about this man a minute. He has now what I want. He is where I long to be. He is with Christ in paradise. How did he get there? He found out that Jesus Christ was Lord. That's right. Now men have it backwards today. They say, "Make Christ your Savior and then if it is convenient you make him Lord." That's backwards. You will find out something about—and I tell you the truth—and you will find this out, I don't know when, but you will find it out. That's backward. You acknowledge Christ as your Lord. He may be your Savior.

That thief on the cross turned and said, "Lord, you are coming into a kingdom. You are not going to stay dead. I'm getting what I deserve. When you come into your kingdom that you'll remember me."

And bless your heart. Our master turned to him and the only one on that hillside, the thousands of people. He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

When that trembling Philippian jailer came to Paul and Silas he said, "What must I do to be saved?"

And Paul said, "Believe on whom? The Lord Jesus Christ."

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord."

Our Lord does not demand admiration only, sympathy, interest, approval. He demands surrender, surrender. What happens to folks that come into church and sit awhile and leave, make all kind of professions, all kind of noises, all kind of claims and then leave and never surrender. They never surrender. Christ never occupied the territory. He never raised his flag. He never occupied the throne or they would still be there.

John said, "If they had been of us they no doubt would have continued with us."

I'm telling you what the ills are in religion. Christ is our friend. He is our counselor. He is our example. He is our God. But first and before all things he is our Lord.

I don't have any place else to go. He is my Lord. I don't have any rights. He owns me.

You say, "What are you preaching?"

I'm preaching slavery, slavery. I'm a bond slave of Jesus Christ. He's my Lord.

You know, there's just one kind of Lord. That's the one that reigns. There is just one kind of Lord and that's one that has total complete control. There is just one kind of Lord. To be a Christian, to be a Christian you are, first of all, to understand that Jesus Christ is your Lord to do with me what he will. And that comes before any assurance that he is my Savior. I'll to the gracious king approach. Who? The king. Whose scepter mercy gives. Perhaps he will admit my touch and then the sinner lives. He doesn't have to.

I can but perish if I go. I am resolved to try. For if I stay away I know I shall forever die. The gospel, I beg your pardon. The gospel of God's glory, the Gospel of Christ's lordship, the gospel of redemption confronts men not primarily with an offer to heal their ills or solve their problems. The gospel is a message, first of all, for rebels who have taken up arms against king Jesus to lay them down, lay them down, lay them down.

I read a story about a king of England. He was a king of justice and yet compassion. I forget his name. But there were six men who were convicted of some sort of rebellion, some sort of uprising against his power and his reign and they were to be heard by the king. They were in prison. They brought them in. And to his amazement as he sat on the throne and they brought in those men, every one of them had somehow gotten hold of a rope. Each one of them had a rope individually. And they had made that rope into a hangman's noose, just a short rope. And each one of them had a rope around his neck. And the noose was hanging here, not down in front.

And they all came before the king. There was six of them. Every one of them with a rope about his neck. Not a word did they say. But they were saying this, "Guilty, unworthy. You have our lives in your hands. You can do with us what you will. We deserve to be hanged. But we'd sure like some mercy."

And that's the way the sinner comes before Christ. He is Lord, sovereign Lord, sovereign King. And that's the gateway to the kingdom of God is to bow to the Lordship of Christ.

Let me show you one thing more and I'll quit. In Acts the second chapter. Now this is, I suppose, what you could call the opening sermon of the apostle's ministry. I

would...wouldn't you say that this is the beginning of the missionary effort to take the gospel to all the world? What did Peter begin with.

The apostles' preaching began with the Lordship of Christ and worked backward to the cross. That's right. Now today's preaching is in the opposite direction. We start with the cross. And we've given men the impression, this is the impression that I get from the average preacher just listening to them. I get the impression that Jesus Christ came down here and put forth an effort to do something that can't be accomplished without your cooperation, that Jesus Christ is powerful, but he is not all powerful because we really hold the final word. And that he went away up to heaven and he is there just...he is wringing his hands. And he loves some folks, but he can't do anything for them. He has done all he can do. Now it's up to them. He has put salvation out there as an offer and nobody seems to be willing to take it. Oh, a few folks are picking up here and there, but they are not paying much attention to it, you know. And it doesn't occupy a great deal of their time. They just want him as a fire escape, you know, as an insurance policy.

"Hang around, Lord. When I need you I'll call on you. Hang around, Jesus." They don't call him Lord. "Hang around Jesus. We'll call."

I get that impression. But the Scripture, the disciples, when they came preaching they didn't come preaching this type of Jesus at all, this weak feminine defeated reformer, frustrated Messiah. This little fellow, the sweet little Jesus boy that has gone to heaven and is just crying his eyes out because you won't let him in your heart. Like one preacher said, "Leaning over the banisters of heaven wondering if you'll let him come into your heart."

But the disciples came here on Pentecost. They said, "We've got something to tell you folks. And want all Israel to know assuredly that that one whom you nailed to the cross, Jesus of Nazareth, who walked this earth, who went about doing good, who healed the sick and the blind and the lame and raised the dead and whom you with wicked hands nailed to a tree." Peter said, "I want you to know this, first. You did it, but God willed it." He said, "You did it," verse 23. "But he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. You did what God determined before to be done. You did it, but God willed it. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. You nailed him to a tree, but God sent him to the tree to redeem a people. And that same Jesus whom you crucified God has made him Lord, sovereign king of the universe. And he has given everything into the hands of Christ. He has vested everything in the person of Christ. He has given everything over to the rule of Christ. He is now Lord."

And they said, "What in the world are we going to do? We are in a mess. What are we going to do? Do you reckon there is any hope for us?"

But you know what? When preachers get through preaching today and everybody switches his gum from one jaw to the other, you know, they wasn't paying any attention to him anyhow. Well, he's just saying what they've heard a half a dozen times. And they look at their watch and wonder if they are going to get out in the next few minutes

and they are tired and weary and he begins an invitation. He talks about this poor little helpless Jesus. About all he can do, isn't it? And he wonders if you would patronage the Son of God. He wonders if you would be willing to let him in your heart. He wonders if you would be willing to do something for Jesus so he wouldn't be a total failure.

Would you do something for Jesus, you know, so he would do something for you? Would you let go and let God have his way? He can and will if you let him. All this sort of thing.

And men stand in their pride and rebellion and they laugh, you know, and they say, "One of these days I'll get right with God. One of these days I might be obliged to let God have his way in my heart. One of these days I'm going to quit my rebellious ways and turn over a new leaf and join the church and...."

Let me tell you something. And Paul went to Corinth and said the same thing. God is not in your hands. Christ is not in your hands. God has not given him over into your hands. He did one time and you nailed him to a cross. God sent him into the world. He was in the world. He was...the world was made by him and the world knew him not. He came to his own and his own received him not. God gave him into the hands of men one time. He was a man. Mary held him in her arms. Joseph held him in his arms. John held him in his arm. And people all over this world, they had an opportunity to embrace him, to touch him. The woman with the issue of blood touched him.

But they nailed him to a cross. God gave him into the hands of men. They nailed him to a cross. "And that same Jesus whom you crucified God has made the Lord. And now you are in his hands. You are in his hand to do with what he will."

That's right. Anybody who tells you anything different is misleading you and deceiving you. The question is not what will you do with Jesus? You have already done what you will. You have crucified him. That's what you'll do with Jesus. That's what every natural man will do with Jesus, not Jesus, but the Christ of the Bible, the Christ who said, "I and my Father are one," the Christ who said, "The Son quickeneth whom he will," the Christ who said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," the Christ who said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up," the Christ who said to Pilate, "You have no authority over me at all except it be given you from above," the Christ who turned to the women who wept and lamented on his way to the cross and said, "Don't cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children."

No he was in your hands. There was a time when Pilate said, "What will you do with Jesus?"

And they told him what to do with him. They said, as they spit in his face, "Nail him to a cross."

But he ain't in your hands anymore. He is on a throne. That's what it says in the book. "Wherefore God hath made him Lord. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him and God hath set him down on his right hand expecting till his enemies become his footstool."

And you find that out and you'll quit debating whether or not you will let Jesus do something for you. And you will begin to cry like the publican in the temple, "Lord, be merciful."

That's right. And we'll go on having our revival meetings and getting the same folks saved again and getting the same folks rededicated again and witnessing to the same old rebels again. But when God almighty is pleased, one of these days he is going to raise up some preachers with backbones and with hearts and with an understanding of what the message is and who the message is about. And he is going to confront some folks with that message. And some of them are going to say, again, "We will not have this man reign over us."

But some of them are going to say, "Lord, what will you have me do?" Somebody is. And that somebody is going to reign with him when he finds out Christ is Lord. Christ is not his savior. Christ is his Lord. And bowing to him as his Lord he finds out Christ saved him. His Lord saved him.

That's what I'm going to preach on tonight. The Lord our righteousness.

Our heavenly Father, we are trying to be true to the souls of men, honest, preach the truth, the glory of our Lord. He is Lord. He is sovereign. He can do with his own what he will. None can stay thy hand. How foolish we are to talk about God who is on the throne and God is almighty and then saying God can't do something. God wills to do this and he can't do it.

But the little, old, flimsy, weak, foolish will of man has thwarted the purpose of a sovereign God. We know better than that. The most unreasonable thing we can think of is God with out power. Thou art almighty. And our Lord Jesus Christ is Lord. You have brought us to see it with dim eyes through a glass darkly in part, but we see it. And we bow this morning. Oh Lord, God what will you have me do. Lord, if you will you can make me clean. Lord, be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, remember me, when you come into your kingdom. For Christ's sake we pray. Amen.